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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, a Senator from the State of Maryland.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray:

Almighty God, most holy, in whom we live and dwell and have our being, we praise You and lift our hearts in gratitude. Hear our intercession for the Members of this body.

Lead our lawmakers as You led Your people once by a pillar of cloud through the day and a pillar of fire by night. Give our Senators more love and more self-denial. Make them kindly in thought, gentle in words, and generous in deeds. Teach them that it is better to give than to receive; better to forget themselves than to put themselves forward; better to serve than to be served. Give them the ability to discern the difference between the truth and the false as they test the issues through debates and hold fast to that which is good. Keep them close to You and open to each other as they serve You and country today. And unto You, the God of love, be all the glory and praise both now and for evermore. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable BENJAMIN L. CARDIN led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, April 9, 2008.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, a Senator from the State of Maryland, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mr. CARDIN thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following my remarks and those of the Republican leader, if he chooses to make remarks, the Senate will proceed to a period of morning business for 1 hour, with Senators allowed to speak during that period of time for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders. The Republicans will control the first half; the majority will control the final half. Following morning business, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 3221, the legislative vehicle for housing.

Yesterday, cloture was invoked on the substitute amendment. If all postcloture debate time is used, debate will expire about 8:45 p.m. tonight. I will be discussing with the Republican leader how we can come to a final determination as to how we should handle the wrapup. The two managers have, I understand, about three or four germane amendments that need to be voted on, and they can be voted on now or we can wait until the time runs out. Those amendments, germane amendments that are pending, require votes. For those that have been filed and are

not pending, that is not the case, unless the two managers agree that they want to bring those up. So we will work our way through this legislation as quickly as we can.

IRAQ WAR TESTIMONY

Mr. REID. Mr. President, yesterday's testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee and the Foreign Relations Committee afforded General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker the opportunity to address the two central questions of the war in Iraq. No. 1: Has the troop surge brought us closer to the day when our troops can come home? Second, is the war in Iraq making America safer? By all accounts, the answer to both questions is no.

While General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker both deserve our gratitude for their hard work—and this is hard work under extraordinarily difficult circumstances—their testimony gave our country no reason to believe the strategy will change. President Bush himself described the purpose of the surge as giving the Iraqi Government and its people the space to achieve reconciliation. Recent violence and the intensifying struggle between al-Maliki and al-Sadr proved beyond any doubt the window we provided may be closing.

President Bush clings to his talking points that the surge is working, but he called his plan a return on success, meaning that if the surge worked, our troops could return home. If we have the success he claims, where is the return?

Since Monday, we have had 12 American soldiers killed in Iraq. We are stuck in the "Twilight Zone" in Iraq. When violence is up, the President says we can't bring our troops home. When violence is down, the President says we can't bring our troops home.

So it is long past time for the President to be honest with the American people: Under what circumstances

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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